

Environmental Health

Hamilton & Labree Roads Site - Chehalis, WA HEALTH CONSULTATION FINDINGS & SITE ACTIVITY UPDATE

INTRODUCTION

Tetrachloroethylene (PCE) contamination was found in drinking water wells near the Hamilton and Labree Roads site in 1993. Recently, a resident living near the site asked the State Department of Health (DOH) to evaluate test results from their drinking water well. DOH conducted the evaluation to determine whether past exposure to low levels of PCE detected in the resident's drinking water posed a health threat to family members. A Health Consultation document was prepared to present the findings of the evaluation.

This joint fact sheet, with input from Ecology and Lewis County, summarizes DOH's Health Consultation findings and site activities to-date. To request a copy of the Health Consultation, call the number listed on the back of this fact sheet.

BACKGROUND

PCE has been found in drinking water at levels as high as 3,740 ppb and higher in groundwater. When PCE was first detected in 1993, Lewis County and DOH informed residents of sampling results and advised them to obtain an alternate drinking water supply.

In 1996, DOH prepared a Health Consultation for Lewis County, evaluating all the known PCE exposures (2 businesses and 4 residences) in the affected area. DOH concluded that a potential health risk existed for persons exposed to high levels of PCE found in three residential wells. Residents were informed of ways to help eliminate or reduce their exposure.

Since 1994, Ecology has conducted two investigations to find the source of PCE contamination. Over the last five years, Ecology has been supplying bottled drinking water to those families and businesses that wanted it.

In June 1998, Ecology detected two sources of PCE contamination. This year, Ecology required the S.C. Breen Construction Company to fully investigate their property, one of two suspected sources. Immediately after issuing the order, Ecology discovered buried drums containing PCE and other contaminants underground on the Breen Construction property. Breen Construction has begun an Emergency Drum Removal Action. Breen Construction is also required to conduct a detailed Remedial Investigation, Feasibility Study, and cleanup, according to an Ecology agreement. Ecology is still continuing to investigate the liable party for the other source of PCE contamination.

EXPOSED POPULATION

There are four residences and two businesses that have been affected by contaminated drinking water at this site. If other resident's wells are found to be at risk, they will be notified immediately.

CONTAMINANT OF CONCERN

PCE is a chemical commonly used for dry-cleaning and metal degreasing. Exposure to PCE can occur by drinking contaminated water, through skin contact, and by breathing vapors released from heated water while showering, cooking or other water usage in the home.

Short-term exposure to very high concentrations of PCE in air can cause dizziness, headaches, sleepiness, confusion, nausea, difficulty with speech and walking, or unconsciousness. Long-term exposure to high concentrations of PCE can harm the liver, kidneys, and central nervous system. Various cancers have been reported in studies of animals exposed orally to high doses of PCE. As a result of those studies, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has determined that PCE is a possible/probable human cancer-causing chemical.

HEALTH MESSAGES

No health threat exists from past exposure to PCE for residents (or their children) whose drinking water was evaluated in the most recent Health Consultation.

One residence has elected to remain connected to a well contaminated with low levels of PCE. People in that residence may still be experiencing exposures from inhalation of PCE while showering or dishwashing. Bottled water is still being provided to this residence for drinking and cooking purposes.

No health threat exists for any other residents in the vicinity of the site. All affected residences have been identified and are either receiving alternate water, have a water treatment system, or are connected to a deeper, uncontaminated water source.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

DOH, Ecology, and Lewis County are taking the following actions to prevent future exposure to contaminated groundwater near the Hamilton and Labree Roads site:

- ◆ Ecology and DOH should continue to test private wells and monitoring wells in the vicinity of the site.

- ◆ Ecology will work with the liable parties to control or eliminate the sources of contamination and cleanup the groundwater.
- ◆ DOH will continue to assist Lewis County by evaluating new sampling results. (This information will be shared with the community.)
- ◆ Lewis County is working with DOH and Ecology to address health concerns from residents living near the site, such as: sampling coordination, address location, responding to public requests for information, notification of well drillers and the public of site activities, providing contacts for investigation, and providing access to right of way for test wells.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Information about the Health Consultation:

Paul Marchant, DOH, toll free 1-877-485-7316

Information about the site investigation and cleanup:

Panjini Balaraju, Ecology, 360-407-6243

Information about local health activities:

Ellen Dodds, Lewis County, 360-740-2691

